

GRAPEVINE

VISITACION VALLEY

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SERVING OUR COMMUNITY

MARCH 2004

Meeting Explores Possibilities for Schlage Lock Site



Buildings at the Schlage Lock site have remained vacant for five years while planning still continues for the property.

Visitacion Valley residents packed the Community Center gymnasium Feb. 21 to learn latest developments in the planning process for the controversial 14-acre Schlage Lock site, a topic of intense neighborhood concern since the company vacated the premises in 1999.

Sponsored by Supervisor Sophie Maxwell and the San Francisco Planning Department, several key speakers from various City departments summarized past proceedings and the future speculation of the former manufacturing plant—a large area of land on the east side of Bayshore Boulevard between Blanken and Sunnydale avenues currently occupied by vacant buildings.

"These things take much longer than we wish they would," said Amit Ghosh of the San Francisco Planning Department in describing the long-term transition of the large acreage from industrial to neighborhood-friendly use. "Stick with it and you will see your vision rise from the ground."

Most of the property being considered for development has been owned since the mid-1970s by the Ingersoll Rand, which has made selling the land in a timely fashion a top priority, according to Elizabeth Hindall, a company representative. She explained that the firm has been actively working with remediation specialists and screening proposals of potential buyers based on three criteria:

successful experience; sensitivity to the neighborhood and the city; and the limited liability of Ingersoll Rand.

"We have been finding real positives about this process," said Hindall.

Highlights of the meeting included the presentation of three-dimensional images from various angles of potential residential housing along with a separate section reserved for new businesses along the east side of Bayshore Boulevard. In the proposed diagrams, both Leland and Visitacion avenues have been extended eastward past Bayshore as far as a new roadway adjacent to the Tunnel Avenue railroad tracks.

"We want to connect this and make it part of the neighborhood," explained Ken Rich of the Planning Department.

Featured with the proposed new housing were an abundance of public open spaces, a north-south greenway, and a generous amount of new trees.

"This planning project could be a model for the City on how to do things right," said Jesse Blout, director of the Mayor's Office of Economic Development.

To further illustrate the attractiveness of the proposal, photographic images depicting efficient re-use of former industrial land in Oakland, Emeryville and Hercules were presented by Stephanie Shakofsky, executive director of the California Center for Land Recycling.

Information presented Feb. 21 updated a series of workshops in late 2001

and early 2002 to shape a plan for development of the former Schlage Lock site and a new Bayshore Station for both Caltrain and the Third Street Light Rail now under construction.

Community members raised vital questions, developed general goals, and begin to discuss strategies for guiding development. Ideas discussed included: how to meet the community's housing needs; ways to create new employment opportunities; how to revitalize local businesses on Leland Avenue and Bayshore Boulevard; which neighborhood services and retailers are needed; and how issue of toxins would affect development.

From 1926 until 1999, the Schlage Lock site was used mainly as a hardware manufacturing facility which included plating and machining operations. Chemicals used during the manufacturing process included various metals and solvents that contained volatile organic compounds (VOCs).

When Schlage Lock closed its San Francisco facility in 1999, it vacated existing buildings at 2201, 2401, 2445, and 2555 Bayshore Boulevard. These include six vacant one-to-three-story industrial buildings, and a seventh building that formerly housed the company offices.

There are also several smaller buildings that formerly served as storage sheds and a security office. consist of approximately 470,000 square feet of floor area. See Page 2

California Commission on Aging Calls For End to Prescription Drug Extortion

SACRAMENTO - Nancy Dolton, chair of the California Commission on Aging (CCoA) on Feb. 9 called for an end of prescription drug extortion of seniors and the State of California. She announced the Commission has endorsed state leadership efforts to save individuals and the State money on prescription purchases through importation of drugs from Canada.

"The overwhelming burden of prescription drug costs is of great concern to individual California seniors, and is an issue for us as a State already under tremendous budget strains."

By the State taking action, it will result in curbing wasteful State prescription drug spending and aid California consumers" stated Dolton in announcing the Commission's action. That action specifically calls for:

*State leadership to explore the establishment of a State sanctioned web site that would provide information and allow California citizens to purchase prescription drugs from Canada, or elsewhere, without fear of quality and legal repercussions.

*The Governor, as part of his challenge to get the state's budget under control, to explore the purchasing of prescription drugs for the State system, i.e., Corrections, State run hospitals, MediCal program, retirement system, etc., from sources offering lower cost, including re-importation from Canada.

*The State Attorney General to look into possible anti-trust action

against pharmaceutical companies who threaten to restrict the supply of prescription drugs to pharmacies in Canada who resell to California customers.

"While recognizing the legal issues of drug importation, California and its senior residents can ill afford to squander precious dollars on their life-saving drugs. Denying seniors access to such drugs is an act of extortion. Saving California \$30 million per year during this budget crisis should get attention and action," stated Ray Mastalish, CCoA Executive Director.

As an example, Nancy Axford, 79, of Sacramento says that seven prescriptions that she and her husband need, and for which there is no generic version, cost on average 92 percent more from the lowest cost Sacramento source than from a reputable Canadian source. One medication costs almost five times as much in Sacramento. "For those living on retirement income, this is not only significant, it can be the difference between life and death," stated Axford, as she prepared to place a web site order.

The Commission believes that ensuring the "safety" of US prescription drugs does not have to be synonymous with sky-high costs resulting in limited access of seniors and other consumers. We also urge serious consideration of Federal policies that offer comparable solutions to the US prescription drug affordability/accessibility issue other than re-importation from Canada.

Unlicensed Contractor Police Sting in Visitacion Valley Results in 19 Citations

The San Francisco Police Department's Fraud Section, working in conjunction with the California Contractors State License Board Fraud Team (SWIFT) and the San Francisco Office of the District Attorney, conducted a sting Jan. 28 in Visitacion Valley to identify unlicensed contractors, resulting in 19 citations being issued.

Police and other enforcement personnel called newspaper and telephone

book advertisers specializing in home remodeling, painting, and hardwood floor refinishing, as well as other home repairs, and asked the advertiser to come to a single location, a house in the Valley, to present a job proposal.

When they arrived, officials cited those who were unlicensed with criminal citations and/or administrative summons before the California State Legal Board (CSLB) for contracting without a license or illegal advertisement.

A contractor's license is required whenever work is offered for payment of \$500 or more, including labor and materials. Some of the individuals cited were cited for having ads declaring that they were not licensed, but still gave estimates well over \$500.

The penalties for contracting without a license are \$500-\$15,000, depending on the violator's prior history, if any, and the potential financial injury to the consumer. The penalty for illegal advertisement is \$700-\$1000.

Guest Speaker at March Planning Alliance Meeting

There will be a guest presentation from the San Francisco Department of Building Inspection at the next meeting of the Visitacion Valley Planning Alliance (VVPA) at 10 a.m. on Saturday, Mar. 13. VVPA usually meets on the second Saturday of each month at the Visitacion Valley Community Center gymnasium, 66 Raymond Ave.

Public Housing Authorities to Gain Local Control to Serve More Families

WASHINGTON - The sweeping reform of the nation's rental assistance voucher program announced in HUD's 2005 proposed budget is designed to help public housing authorities (PHAs) enable more low-income families to transition to self-sufficiency while reducing the number of families on long waiting lists around the country.

"Today families must wait years to receive a voucher," said HUD Assistant Secretary Michael Liu. "Our reforms are intended to create innovative solutions for those Americans in need of housing assistance."

The new Flexible Voucher Program (FVP) will allow PHAs to assist the 1.9 million families the Section 8 program currently assists and potentially serve more families. Under FVP, PHAs will continue to receive direct funding from HUD to administer the program, but with added flexibility and less red tape.

FVP shifts the rental assistance program from a unit-based distribution system to a dollar-based system to give PHAs the freedom to adjust their programs to address the changing needs of their communities and better control increasing voucher costs. The average cost for each voucher has increased at an alarming rate - 23 percent in the last two years alone.

FVP will allow PHAs to set rents using local rental market data rather than HUD's Fair Market Rent (FMR) data, which is estimated, imprecise and often lags behind market fluctuations. Giving PHAs the authority and incentive to pay no more than true market rents will allow PHAs to maximize their funding and serve more families.

Currently HUD gives PHAs a specific number of vouchers they distribute to qualified families. This puts a cap on the number of families a PHA can assist. With a dollar-based program, PHAs can use their funding to design programs to serve more families based on local needs - as was done prior to shifting to a unit-based program in 1999.

In addition, the FVP will reward housing authorities that are good managers through performance-based incentives while holding PHAs accountable for poor performance.

Housing authorities that utilize existing self-sufficiency mechanisms, such as the Voucher Homeownership Program, or develop others to promote higher levels of income and employment that will transition families out of the program will be rewarded with additional fees for administering the program.

New Visitacion Avenue Barriers at Herz Playground



City workers recently replaced a damaged metal and wood guardrail along Visitacion Avenue at Herz Playground with heavy-duty concrete barriers after neighbors complained that former one had been sitting on the street for more than a year.

Grapevine Mailbox

A Social Security Problem

Editor:

In response to *A Social Security Problem* (Grapevine Mailbox - January 2004):

Suggestion: before sharing second-hand political information with everyone on your e-mail list, or before posting it to the web as gospel, take just a few minutes to do some pro-active Internet research. If you had, you could have quickly determined that the text you have posted is entirely inaccurate. It's nothing more than urban legend – inaccurate gossip gone wild!

The full debunking report can be found at <http://www.snopes.com/politics/taxes/pensions.asp>

If informing others was your objective, perhaps you will retract your story and share the debunking report with them too.

Martha. Pettengill

Visitacion Valley Grapevine responds:

Hello Martha:

Thanks for responding. But if you'll notice, *A Social Security Problem* was a letter to the editor – hence, somebody's opinion – not the opinion of the Grapevine, and definitely not "gospel" as you so put it.

We get a fair share of "opinions" all the time: some are factual; some don't make any sense at all; and some have been floating around from mailbox to mailbox (usually unsigned). Regardless of whether or not the Grapevine shares an opinion, if someone's point of view is "interesting," we're sometimes compelled to share it. That's what a "Letters to the Editor" section is all about.

Regards,

Visitacion Valley Grapevine

Changes to Medicare

To get informed information on about the recent changes to Medicare, call toll-free 1-800-MEDICARE. Your Medicare now offers more options and benefits, like access to preventive services and a voluntary Medicare-approved prescription drug discount cards in June. You could even qualify for a \$600 credit toward this card to help pay for your prescriptions. So call toll-free 1-800-MEDICARE to get official information. The same Medicare. More benefits.

Peter Bauer

Third Suspect Joins Pair In Bank Robbery Series

A third suspect has joined a bank robbery series pair in their latest bank robbery, which occurred on Feb. 6 in South San Francisco. This latest robbery is the twelfth in a series over the past several months committed by the same individuals, with five having occurred in San Francisco and six in Daly City.

The latest South San Francisco robbery was the first involving a third male suspect. The suspects have been armed with handguns, but to date there has been no injury inflicted on any of the victims.

The first San Francisco robbery occurred on September 5, 2003 at the Bank of the West, 2606 Ocean Ave. The last San Francisco robbery occurred at Citibank, 2400 19th Avenue on January 28, 2004. All 12 robberies have taken place in the morning.

Persons with information are urged to contact the Robbery Section, 553-1201.

Marketers of Skinny Pill Made False Claims

The Fountain of Youth Group, LLC, and its principal, Edita Kaye, have settled Federal Trade Commission charges that they made false and unsubstantiated weight-loss and health claims for their dietary supplement products – Skinny Pill AM, Skinny Sleep PM, Skinny Carbs, and Skinny Pill for Kids (collectively "Skinny Pills").

The proposed settlement, which requires the court's approval, prohibits the defendants from making any weight-loss or health benefit claims for the Skinny Pills and similar products, unless they have competent and reliable scientific evidence to support such claims. The proposed settlement also contains a judgment of \$6 million, which has been suspended due to the defendants' inability to pay.

The FTC filed its complaint in federal district court alleging that the Florida-based defendants advertise their products on the Internet at www.skinnypill.com and through other multimedia advertisements, making claims such as:

"My PM Skinny Sleep works overnight with a thermic formula to burn fat while you sleep . . . to make sure you wake up . . . skinnier than when you went to bed."

"Skinny Carbs is the miracle that lets you occasionally 'cheat' without guilt or added fat pounds. . . . When you eat a carb, Skinny Carbs blocks the starch from being broken down into sugar. . . . Skinny carbs cuts [sic] right into that cycle . . . and prevents starch from turning into sugar and then into fat. Instead, it passes right through our system. The result? We can enjoy our carbs without having them turn into body fat."

"The Skinny Pill for Kids – "This is the FIRST thermic and herbal formula ever developed for weight loss for children 6 to 12 and has been created to help our children win their battle with fat."

The FTC complaint alleges that the defendants did not have a reasonable basis to substantiate the claims that use of the Skinny Pill AM and the Skinny Sleep PM causes weight loss, increases fat burning, normalizes insulin and blood sugar levels, and causes dietary fat to be passed out of the body before it can be digested; that use of Skinny Carbs

blocks the absorption of carbohydrates, preventing them from being converted into fat, and thereby causing weight loss; and that use of Skinny Carbs normalizes insulin and blood sugar levels.

The FTC's complaint also alleges as false the claim that use of the Skinny Pill AM and Skinny Sleep PM causes dietary fat to be passed out of the body before it can be digested, thereby causing substantial weight loss. In addition, the FTC alleges that the defendants' claims that scientific research establishes the use of the Skinny Pill AM and the Skinny Sleep PM causes weight loss and that use of Skinny Carbs blocks new fat from forming when one eats a starchy meal are false.

The FTC further alleges that the defendants did not have reasonable basis to substantiate the claims that use of the Skinny Pill for Kids for children 6 to 12 years old causes weight loss; causes children to burn increased fat; blocks new fat deposits; normalizes insulin and blood sugar levels; reduces the risk of obesity-related disease, including heart disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes; helps control diabetes and digestive disorders in children; or is safe. Finally, the FTC alleges that the defendants' claims that scientific research establishes that use of the Skinny Pill for Kids causes weight loss in, or is safe for, children 6 to 12 years old is false.

Visitacion Valley Man Murdered in Street

A Visitacion Valley man was murdered around 11:45 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 25 at the corner of Kelloch and Velasco avenues as he was returning home from work.

A sudden burst of gunfire took the life of 26-year-old Andreas Porter, a group home counselor at MAC's Children and Family Services in Daly City.

Porter had worked as a coach and tutor at the Flournoy Street organization since 2001 after having attended Texas Southern University where he majored in child development. He had grown up as a resident of Geneva Towers, and was currently living at Heritage Homes, the 148-unit housing complex that replaced the twin highrise buildings several years ago.

Meeting for Open Space and Park Maintenance

The Neighborhood Parks Council (NPC) will be hosting a District Park Planning meeting for District 11 (Visitacion Valley, Excelsior, Portola, Oceanview, Ingleside) on Thursday, Mar. 18 from 6 to 8:30 p.m. at the Ingleside Police Station Community Room, John V. Young Lane off San Jose Avenue at Balboa Park.

This meeting is one of eight in various neighborhoods during March to generate ideas about park maintenance

during an \$8.5 million budget crisis and to share NPC's recently released open space study: *Green Envy: Achieving Equity in Open Space*.

Sponsored by the Neighborhood Parks Council, District Park Planning is a forum for community members and representatives from the Recreation and Park Department to assess and improve parks and recreation services in San Francisco's neighborhood parks.

Meeting Explores Schlage Lock Site

From Page 1

Home Depot soon announced plans to construct a single-story 32-foot-tall commercial building of about 108,000 square feet and an outdoor garden center of about 17,000 square feet that would have occupied all of the east side of Bayshore Boulevard between Raymond and Sunnysdale avenues. A three-story building formerly containing the Schlage Lock offices at 2201 Bayshore Blvd. at Blanken Avenue on a 1.5-acre surplus parcel was not proposed for inclusion in the aborted Home Depot project. Neither was a 7,000-square-foot parcel at the southeast corner of Bayshore Boulevard and Visitacion Avenue.

In 1999, the Visitacion Valley Planning Alliance, is a group of Visitacion Valley neighbors interested in improving the quality of life in the neighborhood, stated that the then-proposed Home Depot project was "inappropriate in terms of size, single use and traffic impact, to say nothing of forever denying the neighborhood a chance to truly revitalize. Its tax revenues will not create new revenue, but will be taken from existing revenue accrued mostly from smaller businesses in the southeast sector of the City which will be driven out of business."

In surveying Valley residents, they found the neighborhood generally wanted to see the site as a mixed-use development serving retail, a City College extension, a new library, affordable housing, daycare and open space.

Working with architects, transport experts, urban planners and landscape architects from Urban Ecology to create a conceptual design, the Planning Alliance developed an alternative reuse design – a site to link Visitacion Valley and Little Hollywood and create a transit-oriented town center. A community meeting held in October 1999 to present the design was unanimously approved.

A draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was compiled in early 2000 by the San Francisco Planning Department to determine effects found to be potentially significant to the surrounding neighborhood during proposed demolition of existing buildings to make room for a proposed Home Depot in Visitacion Valley. Impacts on visual quality, transportation, operational air quality, operational noise and contaminated soils were determined to be potentially significant.

A remedial investigation of the soil and groundwater at the Schlage Lock site in 2001 found both volatile organic compounds and metals as the primary contaminants, according to a detailed report recently issued by the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC).

According to the report, the purpose of the investigation of soil was to "define the extent and type of contamination in soil, and collect data to support a human health risk assessment and a soil feasibility study consistent with the planned redevelopment of the property."

The program was conducted over a period of eight years and included an analysis of more than 250 soil samples.

The Initial Study of the EIR had a response overwhelmingly in favor of including a *Town Center-Transit Village* alternative plan for the Schlage Lock site in the EIR process. More than 275 letters were sent from community members to the Planning Department expressing support. In addition there were many letters from local community groups as well as groups outside of the area, including the Sierra Club and San Francisco Tomorrow.

After a number of community meetings, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors passed a zoning control measure on Feb. 26, 2001 barring construction for one year of any commercial building larger than 65,000 square feet on the former site of Schlage Lock Company, forcing Home Depot to abort its quest to build its first store in San Francisco.

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Come to Church This Week

GRAPEVINE

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Pat Crocker: Director

Multi-Cultural Food Fest at "Little Vis"



Supervisor Sophie Maxwell attended the multi-cultural event at VVES, socialized with parents, and enjoyed the singing and drumming performances.



The home-cooked food was simply delicious. Everyone got a taste of the Philippines, China, Vietnam, Samoa, and of course, America.

Celebrating the diversity of the San Francisco and the local neighborhood, the Visitacion Valley Elementary School (VVES) PTA sponsored a pot luck dinner on Jan. 30. More than 150 people attended,

bringing home-cooked delicacies from many cultures to share with one another. Special thanks to PTA members Mana Wilson, Neo Veavea, Christine Mauiu and Edgar Morales (PTA president).

Poor Rix's Almanac

by Rix Quinn

Dear Poor Rix: How do you get the bones out of a catfish? - M. Kaufman

Somebody once asked Poor Rix "How do you make a catfish?" The answer, of course is, "Give him a rod and reel."

But extracting bones from this critter? That's different. Poor Rix researched the beast, and will now reveal more than you wanted to know about the seafood with whiskers.

1. Catfish live in fresh water. Most catfish don't have scales, so they can't tell you how much they weigh.

2. Fishermen claim they're easy to catch because, frankly, they're dumber than a turnip.

3. Catfish enjoy most any bait, including trash or waste matter. This gives them horrible halitosis, and explains why you've never seen two catfish make out.

4. Some channel catfish grow to 40 pounds. That's too much to eat in one sitting, unless you are a shark. But sharks never sit down, anyway.

5. Poor Rix knows nothing about deboning fish. But here's another common seafood question: "Should I serve catfish for dinner?"

Answer: "Yes, if you can get them to sit at the table."

Dear Poor Rix: With all the tools modern science possesses, why can't it solve the problem of aging? - Getting Older

If Poor Rix had the answer, he would still look 19 instead of...uh...well, never mind how old Poor Rix looks.

First, aging is a natural event, like floods, homework, and cold sores. A person without wrinkles is either a person without experience, or one without moisturizer.

Children, like adults, lose their teeth. But unlike adults, they can grow new ones.

Nearly everybody wants to look older until age 30, at which time they want to look younger. Hardly anybody wants to look the same age all the time (except Dorian Gray, and he's not real).

One of Poor Rix's friends is deathly afraid to wrinkle. She's had so much facial enhancement, when she smiles she looks like my gerbil. (But I find that attractive.)

After her last surgery we met for lunch to celebrate. Suddenly, without warning, a piece of her nose dropped right into the potato salad. She screamed, covered her face with a napkin, and raced for the restroom.

I ran after her, asking, "Do you need to go to the hospital?"

"No, no," she said. "I'll be OK."

"But I sure hate to lose face in front of my friends."

Poor Rix offers bad answers to good questions. E-mail him at rquinn@charter.net.

Protecting Yourself from Moving Scams

You can't e-mail your boxes of things from your old house to your new house—at least, not yet. However,

the Internet can make your move easier in other ways, as long as you're careful to protect yourself from scams, frauds and extortionists. Scam movers will frequently give you an estimate much lower than legitimate movers', only to hold your possessions hostage until you pay a higher price, usually in cash.

Here are some ways to protect yourself from these rogue movers:

*Never rely on a phone or Internet price estimate. A legitimate mover will send a trained and experienced estimator to your home. Insist on an "in-home" survey of your household goods in order to receive a more accurate price estimate.

*A price that seems too good to be true probably is. If a mover comes in with an estimate way below all the others, that should be a red flag to examine the basis of the estimate

Removing Wallpaper Easily the First Time

Wallpaper steamers can be as easy to use as an iron or garment steamer, and they allow smart do-it-yourselfers to quickly remove old wallpaper and begin decorating the room of their dreams. Simply fill the wallpaper steamer with tap water, plug in and steam away.

Compared to chemical wallpaper removal products, wallpaper steamers are faster, safer and more effective on all types of wallpaper, including vinyl, painted wallpaper and multiple layers.

Wallpaper steamers require about 20 minutes to warm up each time the tank is refilled (generally, two tankfuls will do a 10' x 12' room). During warm-up time, the user can prepare the walls by using the edge of a scraper or running a special wallpaper "scoring tool" over the wall to create perforations in the paper. This will allow the steam to penetrate the vinyl or multiple layer wallpaper. Scoring tools and scrapers are sold at home improvement, hardware and paint stores.

Once the steamer is warmed up, the steamplate is held over a section of wallpaper for about 15 seconds.

When the wallpaper is damp, the user scrapes off the paper with one hand, while the other hand works ahead with the lightweight steamplate to soak the next section of paper—a continual process.

NAPS

Champion of Spelling at VVES



Congratulations to Visitacion Valley Elementary School fourth-grader Lily Zhane, who won this year's annual schoolwide spelling bee championship. She will represent "Little Vis" in the upcoming citywide contest.

Protecting Yourself from Return Preparer Fraud

Return Preparer Fraud generally involves the preparation and filing of false income tax returns by preparers who claim inflated personal or business expenses, false deductions, unallowable credits or excessive exemptions on returns prepared for their clients. Preparers may also manipulate income figures to obtain fraudulent tax credits,

such as the Earned Income Tax Credit. In some situations, the client (taxpayer) may not have knowledge of the false expenses, deductions, exemptions and/or credits shown on their tax returns. However, when the IRS detects the false return, the taxpayer must pay the additional taxes and interest and may be subject to penalties and criminal prosecution.

While most preparers provide excellent service to their clients, the IRS urges taxpayers to be very careful when choosing a tax preparer. You should be as careful as you would in choosing a doctor or a lawyer.

Choosing a Return Preparer

Things to consider when choosing a return preparer include:

*Avoid tax preparers who claim they can obtain larger refunds than other preparers.

*Avoid preparers who base their fee on a percentage of the amount of the refund.

*Use a reputable tax professional that signs your tax return and provides you with a copy for your records.

*Consider whether the individual or firm will be around to answer questions about the preparation of your tax return months, or even years, after the return has been filed.

*Review your return before you sign it and ask questions on entries you don't understand.

*No matter who prepares your tax return, you (the taxpayer) are ultimately responsible for all of the information on your tax return. Therefore, never sign a blank tax form.

What Goes on Behind Those Closed Doors

A recent survey reveals some fascinating habits and quirks among Americans when they visit the bathroom.

Some of the more curious findings from the Quilted Northern 2004 Bathroom Confidential report include: Home Alone?

*Sixty-three percent of people surveyed leave the door open while using the bathroom when they're home alone. Bathroom Detectives

*The secrets of your medicine cabinet are apparently safe—most of the time. Only 38 percent of people admitted to going through someone else's cabinet. *Only four percent of snoopers have ever been caught. A Bathroom...Or Is It?

*The bathroom is used for many different purposes. In addition to the reading done by 74 percent of respondents, the survey found 47 percent of people talk on the phone, 23 percent watch TV and 11 percent even

eat in the bathroom.

*Ty Pennington, the handsome and hilarious carpenter from the TV show "Trading Spaces" plays the guitar on occasion while actress Aida Turturro from the popular Sopranos series is known to meditate.

Strong Opinions on Soft Subject

*Nearly all survey respondents—80 percent—said softness was the number one feature they valued in a bathroom tissue, followed by absorbency, 57 percent.

Ultimate Question: Over Or Under?

*A majority—72 percent—prefer their toilet paper come from the top.

*Celebrities aren't so different from everyone else—Ty Pennington and Hollywood actresses Debi Mazar and Karen Duffy also opt for "over."

The survey was taken as part of the launch of the new, softest ever Quilted Northern bath tissue. For more survey results and information, please visit: www.quiltednorthern.com.

NAPS

Micro-Minute

by Mr. Food



Cutting Carbs

Was getting rid of a few extra pounds one of your New Year's resolutions? My philosophy has always been one of moderation, so I've been following the low-carbohydrate trend, which is bigger than ever!

In a nutshell, carbohydrates are the first things your body burns for fuel. When you start eliminating carbs from your diet, your body starts burning fat for fuel, and the result is weight loss.

That's why, as long as it's okay with your personal health situation, cutting back on foods high in carbohydrates, such as bread, rice, and pasta, and boosting protein intake with eggs, meat, and fish, can put you on the right path to shedding excess weight.

The perfect way to get your low-carbohydrate meals to the table quicker is by using the microwave. Here are some tips:

*Simply par-cooking chicken in the microwave before grilling cuts down on the typically long grilling time, plus it doesn't require adding extra oil or butter.

*When preparing fish in the microwave, place the thicker sections toward the edge of the dish, and overlap thin edges to make everything a uniform thickness.

*To give microwaved meat that nice browned finish that everybody likes,

cook it on a browning dish.

*Eggs can be cooked in the microwave, but only OUT OF THEIR SHELLS and in a microwave-safe dish. Also, when cooking a whole egg in the microwave, pierce the yolk BEFORE COOKING, to prevent it from popping.

*Most microwave recipes for eggs, chicken, fish, and meat call for a standing time that is usually 5 to 10 minutes, depending on the size and weight of the food. This is an important step which allows the internal temperature of the food to rise enough to complete the cooking process. Don't skip it!

If you're considering a low-carbohydrate diet, or any other weight-loss plan, I suggest consulting with your doctor first. I've included a few low-carb (and really tasty!) recipes that can be prepared in the microwave.

There you have it—the combination of microwave convenience and healthy eating. Now there's something to make us say... "OOH IT'S SO GOOD!!!"

Quick-as-a-Wink Pesto Chicken (4 servings) "If you have ten minutes and these few ingredients, this becomes an elegant dinner option."

4 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves (1 to 1-1/4 pounds total); 1/4 teaspoon salt; 1/8 teaspoon black pepper; 1/2 cup prepared pesto sauce; 4 slices (4 ounces total) mozzarella cheese; 1 can (2.25 ounces) sliced black olives, drained (optional)

1. Place the chicken breast halves on a microwave-safe platter. Season with the salt and pepper then cover with a single layer of thick paper towels.

Microwave at 90 percent power for 5 minutes.

2. Uncover the chicken and top each piece with a dollop of pesto sauce and one slice of mozzarella cheese.

3. Microwave at 90 percent power for 2 minutes, or until no pink remains in the chicken and the cheese is melted. Sprinkle with sliced olives, if desired, and serve immediately.

Low-Carb Microwave Cheesecake (8 servings) 1/4 cup butter; 1 cup finely chopped walnuts; 1 cup plus 2 tablespoons Splenda artificial sweetener (27 packets), divided; 2 packages (8 ounces each) cream cheese; 1/4 teaspoon salt; 1/3 cup heavy cream; 4 eggs; 1 teaspoon vanilla extract; 2 tablespoons lemon juice (optional).

1. In a microwave-safe 9-inch pie plate, heat the butter in the microwave at 100 percent power for 45 to 60 seconds, until melted. Stir in the nuts and 2 tablespoons artificial sweetener; mix well then press evenly into the bottom of the pie plate. Microwave at 100% power for 1-1/2 minutes.

2. In a medium-sized microwave-safe bowl, microwave the cream cheese at 50 percent power for 1 minute. Add the remaining 1 cup sweetener, the salt, and heavy cream; beat until well blended.

3. Beat in the eggs, vanilla, and lemon juice, if desired. Microwave at 100 percent power for 3 to 4 minutes, or until hot. Stir mixture then pour into the crust. Microwave the cheesecake at 50 percent power for 7 minutes, or until the center is set.

4. Cool cake slightly then refrigerate for 4 to 6 hours. Serve with fresh fruit.

Book Reviews

The Little People

A modern classic of British children's fantasy is now being published in an omnibus edition for the first time in the U.S.

In The Bromeliad Trilogy (HarperCollins, \$17.99), best-selling author Terry Pratchett introduces the nomes, little people who live in a human world they don't quite understand. Living under the floorboards of a large department store, they think outside is only a myth. Soon, they have to face the outside, first when nomes from there arrive seeking shelter, and then directly when they learn the store is to be demolished. They need to find a way to survive these changes, and the adventure is only beginning.

Pratchett, the creator of the acclaimed Discworld series, re-creates a world kids know well: a world of mystery, of wonder and of people bigger than they are. He does it with the satirical wit that has made him beloved in England for years.

A Key Factor in Health

According to a new book, people can reduce their risk of death from heart attacks and strokes by 50 to 80 percent (while lowering their risk of premature death from all causes by 50 percent), all within just 60 to 90 days.

Most Consumers Don't Know Their Credit Score

Do you know your credit score? According to a national survey initiated by Household International, more than 75 percent of American consumers do not know their credit score.

A credit score is a number that helps a lender evaluate credit risk. Typically, the higher your credit score, the lower your interest rate. The numbers are based on information contained in a credit report at the time the score is requested and can change over time. Because credit reporting agencies may have different information about you, scores also may vary among agencies.

Factors that influence credit scores are payment history, total outstanding debt and the amount of credit available to you. In addition, the types of credit you use (e.g., credit card, mortgage, auto loan) and the number of times you applied for new credit during the previous 12 months can impact your credit score. So if credit scores are so important, and 78 percent of Americans agree it is important to know their credit score (according to the Household survey), why don't more people know their score?

Improving your credit score takes time and diligence, but some general tips include:

- *Always try to pay bills on time.
- *Keep credit card balances low or pay them off entirely.
- *Apply for and open new credit accounts only as needed.
- *Do not fall for "quick fix" solutions.

Credit scores are used for more than just loan applications-employers, landlords and insurance companies may

In The H Factor Solution (Basic Health Publications, \$14.95), best-selling authors and health researchers James Braly, M.D. and Patrick Holford describe homocysteine, an amino acid in our bodies that is toxic when elevated and now known to be a predictor and cause of a great percentage of heart attacks and strokes. They explain how to measure and interpret your homocysteine level and how, by following the H-Factor Solution-a combination of nutritional supplements, diet, and lifestyle-you can significantly and quickly lower elevated homocysteine into the safe zone and reduce your risk of strokes, heart attacks, cancer, Alzheimer's disease, and premature death from other causes.

Faith and Finances

A renowned investor has written a timely book about the importance of reintegrating faith and finances. Gary Moore, former senior vice president of investments at Paine Webber before founding his own investment firm, draws on 50 years of studying the Bible, politics and economics in his book, Faithful Finances 101 (Templeton Foundation Press, \$24.95). In this book, Moore cautions that much financial advice emanating from some influential evangelical authors and speakers is based on scare tactics and distortions of Biblical teachings.

NAPS

check your credit score with your permission.

Checking your credit report and credit score is easy. All three major credit reporting agencies make reports and scores available by phone, U.S. mail or online. Contact Equifax, (800) 685-1111, www.equifax.com; Experian, (888) 397-3742, www.experian.com; or TransUnion, (800) 916-8800, www.transunion.com.

NAPS

Program Prompts Better Care for Elderly and Dependent Adults

by CA Attorney General Bill Lockyer

In April 2000 I established Operation Guardians as a pre-emptive, pro-active program to prevent abuse and neglect of the elderly and dependent adults in our state's nursing homes. This program uses multi-agency teams to conduct unannounced inspections of facilities and identify problems that threaten the dignity, safety, welfare and quality-of-life of the residents.

Between April 2001 and March 2003, Operation Guardians conducted 150 surprise inspections of California skilled nursing homes, generating corrections of dangerous conditions and improving the quality of care and living conditions for the facilities' residents.

Operation Guardians is helping ensure that the 250,000 elderly and dependent adults who reside in the state's 1,400 skilled nursing homes are receiving the care they deserve. This program is preventing

S.F. Police Warns Public of Canadian Lottery Scam Alert

San Francisco Police Department Fraud inspectors are alerting the public to the most recent lottery scam, this one involving a purported Canadian lottery.

The victim in this case, a 90-year-old San Francisco woman, responded Jan. 28 to a telephone caller who informed the victim that she had won \$250,000 in a Canadian lottery.

The caller told the victim that, in order to claim the winnings, she had to wire the caller \$2,970 to pay the "exemption tax." The victim went to her bank and wired the suspect the amount.

The next day, the suspect again called the victim, telling her that she had to wire an additional \$2,200 "to cover the federal tax."

The caller would then come to her residence in person to give her the money. Again, the victim complied, wiring a total of \$5,438, including bank fees. No one came to the house to deliver the winnings.

Fraud inspectors are investigating the case to try to identify a suspect or suspects.

Police advise that, if a person receives a telephone call of this nature, he or she should contact the Fraud Section, 553-1521, and also Project Colt, a public service specializing in tracking scam phone calls, 514-939-8628, if a person has received the call within two weeks.

If it has been more than two weeks, the person should, in addition to calling the Fraud Section, call Phone Busters, another public service, 705-494-4008. In addition, it is recommended that the caller contact the FBI, 554-7400.

loss, injury and death by identifying health and fire hazards, theft of patients' trust account funds and failures to provide adequate medical services to these vulnerable citizens before they can escalate into life-threatening problems.

Operation Guardians operates and inspected facilities in 16 counties: Alameda, Contra Costa, Fresno, Humboldt, Los Angeles, Monterey, Napa, Riverside, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Francisco, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Sonoma and Ventura. Additional inspections were conducted at the request of three counties: Marin, San Mateo and Yolo.

Most of the nursing homes inspected during the past two years quickly responded by making improvements in the facilities and the medical and health care provided. The most prevalent problems identified were: failure to meet the state's minimum staffing requirements of 3.2 nursing care hours per day per resident, ensure that nurse assistants possess valid certification, document tuberculosis tests of employees and prevent and document the loss of residents' property.

The inspections showed that performance levels ranged from near compliance with federal and state standards of care to situations which required referrals to law enforcement, regulatory or licensing agencies.

The inspections resulted in two felony convictions. In one, a licensed vocational nurse was

Crossword Puzzle Solution

BAIN POP ATIC
ELLE UME PABA
DISAGREE AMIR
ETA OLIVE ASB
DAO EVER
CIPOLIN ARADO
PLEB NAPICAL
ISTLE GRACKLE
TALC ELA
ERY FABLE IOA
CASA SEAEAGLE
UNIT CAT BOER
AINE ANE TRAY

Healthy Ideas

*Home gardeners, troubled by symptoms of repetitive stress injury, known as carpal tunnel syndrome, as well as arthritis, tendinitis or poor circulation, may want to consider a certain kind of glove. The glove, called Handeze, features a form fitting design that traps natural body heat. This raises the temperature while keeping the pressure on tissues and increasing blood flow to fingers, hands and wrists. More information on this glove, which received the National Home Gardening Seal of Approval, is at www.domeind.com.

*For the heart to function properly, it needs to get a supply of energy. The heart gets about 70 percent of its energy from burning fatty acids within cells. L-Carnitine (el-carnih-teen) is the nutrient that helps get these fatty acids into the cells to be burned for "fuel." New research shows that L-Carnitine, when used in conjunction with traditional medicine, may give the heart some of the energy it needs to fight disease in several ways and over time. For more information about L-Carnitine, visit the human nutrition center at www.carnitine.com.

*Several research studies suggest that the antioxidant vitamins C and E may protect against the development and progression of cataracts. Early evidence also suggests that the carotenoids lutein (pronounced loo-teen) and zeaxanthin (pronounced zee-uh-zan-thin), which are also antioxidants, may be protective against cataracts. More than half of the observational studies done have reported a reduced risk of cataracts among people who took vitamins C and/or E in supplemental form or through higher dietary intake and who had increased blood levels of

one or both vitamins. For more information on nutrition and maintaining eye health, visit www.aoa.org/eyeonnutrition.

*In some patients, lifestyle changes alone may not be enough to reduce the risk of a recurrent stroke or a heart attack. There are effective treatments like Plavix(r) (clopidogrel bisulfate), a prescription antiplatelet medication that is proven to help keep platelets in the blood from sticking together and forming clots. This helps keep blood flowing, thereby reducing the risk of potentially life-threatening events such as stroke or heart attack. To learn more about PLAVIX, please visit www.plavix.com, or call 1-888-547-4079.

*Many people undergoing surgery may not be aware that heparin, a blood thinner used to treat or prevent blood clots during surgery, can cause a life-threatening, serious allergic reaction called heparin-induced thrombocytopenia or HIT. Every year, approximately three percent to five percent of patients (360,000 to 600,000 people) develop HIT. If not detected early and treated promptly, this reaction to heparin can cause complications such as strokes, heart problems, limb amputation, organ damage, skin problems, even death. The good news is that doctors have discovered alternative blood thinners known as direct thrombin inhibitors that can be used to stop the clotting process and help avoid problems associated with HIT. To learn more about HIT, call toll free 1-877-GSK-4HIT.

*Artificial tear solutions that wash out or change the electrolyte balance in eyes can lead to irritation. As a result, doctors developed TheraTears(r), an artificial tear that's preservative free and contains a patented electrolyte balance shown to match that of human tears. Each drop provides the same electrolyte balance as the normal tear film and provides soothing dry-eye relief that's healthy for the eye. For more information, visit www.theratears.com.

*Middle ear infections (otitis media) are the most common cause of temporary hearing loss, affecting 70 percent of all infants and young children. Some children get recurring otitis media with effusion (OME), a buildup of fluid in the middle ear cavity, which can cause permanent damage. Because current antibiotics are not always useful for treating OME, biologists at the House Ear Institute are determining the role of the body's innate immune system in protecting the middle ear from bacterial infections. For more information, visit www.hei.org, call (213) 483-4431, or write HEI, 2100 West Third Street, Los Angeles, CA 90057.

*From thermostats and fluorescent lights to medical supplies, many products contain mercury that can pollute the environment. The good news is that each of us can help reduce mercury pollution and protect people and wildlife. Mercury can be found in thousands of products used daily. When these products are discarded, they are often incinerated. Purchasing mercury-free products and disposing of mercury products safely is easier with a new guide from the National Wildlife Federation. The Mercury Products Guide is available online at www.nwf.org/cleantherain. NAPS

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Roman Catholic (1907)

95 Years in Visitacion Valley

Daily Masses
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Saturday Masses
7:30 a.m. & 5 p.m.

Sunday Masses
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12:30 & 5 p.m.

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For everyone 18 and older at
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*Very therapeutic and fun. You do not need to stay the entire day...come for as long as you like.
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FAMILY PACKAGE
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Atacama	Great	Libyan	Rub al-Khali
Chihuahuan	Sandy	Mojave	Sahara
Dasht-e	Great	Namib	Sonoran
Kauir	Victoria	Nubian	Syrian
Death Valley	Kalahari	Painted	Taklimakan
Gibson	Kara Kum	Desert	Thar

Historic Proportions

Match clues to answers.

- 1919
- This was the first round trip transatlantic air flight was completed on July 13.
 - Severe race riots broke out here in July.
 - The police department went on strike here Sept. 9.
 - He became world heavyweight boxing champion on July 4.
 - This commenced on July 1 between New York and Chicago.
 - This was signed on June 28 to formally end World War I.
 - President Augusto B. Leguia was assassinated here on Sept. 16.
 - Major film stars started their own movie company on Apr. 17.
 - American Legion formed here on Mar. 15.
 - He was named director of the American Relief Administration on Mar. 2.
 - This area was proclaimed a republic on Jan. 10.
 - Rose Bowl winners on Jan. 1.
 - Questionable World Series winners in eight games on Oct. 9.
 - Amendment ratified as part of the Constitution on Jan. 29.
 - Company was incorporated in

Five Years Ago In the Grapevine

MARCH 1999

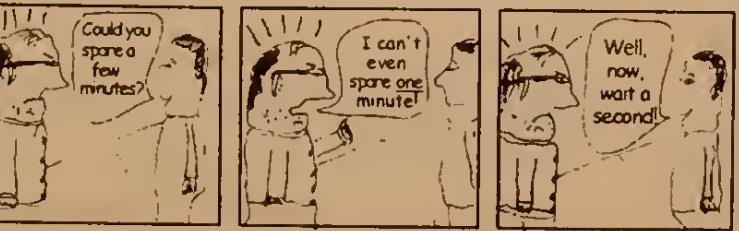
*More than 100 Visitation Valley neighbors joined Mayor Willie Brown at a candlelight vigil Apr. 6 in memory of Sugi Kim, co-owner of the KC Market at 400 Wilde St. who was shot to death by a masked robber.

*Home Depot presented its plans to the Visitation Valley Task Force on Mar. 27 for a newly-constructed 107,000 square-foot store to be built on the present site of Schlage Lock.

*A new Visitation Valley organization, the Foundation for Christian Education, held its first meeting Mar. 28.

*Local merchants and residents were invited to a free business networking workshop on Apr. 22 at the Bank of America on Leland Avenue.

Sump, the Grump



Did You Know?

*America's World War II veterans have waited 58 years for a national memorial commemorating their service and sacrifice. Their wait is nearly over. The American Battle Monuments Commission has announced that the National World War II Memorial will be dedicated in Washington, D.C., on Saturday, May 29, 2004. Arrangements for activities associated with the dedication will be available on the memorial Web site www.wwiimemorial.com and toll-free number (1-800-639-4992) as they are confirmed.

*More and more, games are becoming more than just child's play. Beyond the obvious fun they bring, games offer a wealth of added benefits. RUBIK'S CUBE, for example, is a game most people are familiar with, but few have ever considered its use in the classroom or doctor's office. However, the portable puzzle can be a useful tool on the job. Teachers use it to illustrate concepts in math in the classroom, while therapists use it in their practice with children and teens. So, next time you get out a game, you may want to look beyond the directions to find new ways of incorporating fun into all you do.

*Any car older than seven years with more than 50,000 miles is a probable candidate for boil over. Your car heats up every time you run it, which creates wear on all the cooling system parts, including hoses, belts, thermostat, and the radiator. 1-800-Radiator is a nationwide service that helps motorists by arranging fast and inexpensive radiator service anywhere in the country. Do-it-yourselfers can call 1-800-Radiator and have a new radiator delivered to their home within 24 hours. For more information on radiator maintenance and repair, visit www.1-800-radiator.com.

*A recent survey found that each year, about 20 percent of people encounter a legal issue involving areas of the law such as real estate, taxes, estate planning and family law. Fortunately, people have access to information sources online that can help them navigate those potentially complex legal situations. One site, called FindLaw.com is said to feature the largest online searchable lawyer directory, with more than one million lawyer listings. To learn more, visit www.findlaw.com.

*When unclogging a sink, plumbers recommend homeowners use tools such as the DrainStick(r) before trying a snake or drain cleaner. The Stick is 24 inches long (long enough to get to the second turn in 90 percent of drain pipes) and it is flexible enough to be easily maneuvered through turns. The tool has a small, angled tip with 56 small barbs that "grab" at clogging material. The barbs either pull clogs out or tear them apart so running water will rinse them through the plumbing. In most cases, the tool doesn't even require homeowners to remove the drain cover before use. It works on all types of drains-sinks, bathtubs and showers. For more information, visit www.DrainStick.com.

*The defense cuts of the 1990s devastated many of the industries that supply the U.S. military. Many firms dropped out of the business of building parts for weapons systems due to lack of work, say experts at the U.S. Business and Industry Council. Many were bought up by foreign interests who wanted U.S. technology and know-how to add to their own industrial capabilities in competition with the surviving American firms. Major corporations have been outsourcing military parts from foreign suppliers more with an eye to profit than security. The House Armed Services Committee chaired by Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-CA) has attempted to reverse these dangerous trends in the 2004 Defense Authorization bill. This legislation requires that all machine tools used in military production be made in the United States by 2007. It creates a \$100 million fund to help firms reconstitute lost manufacturing capabilities vital to national defense.

*One way to make your home safer is to provide ample storage for clutter in

the form of toy boxes, book shelves, baskets and cabinets. Storage and toy chests need safety latches. Don't leave matches, candles, fireworks, or grill lighters within kids' reach. If you are planning on buying any new upholstery, make sure it has the Upholstered Furniture Action Council (UFAC) hangtag, which ensures it was manufactured to meet the industry's voluntary safety standards.

*The American Forest & Paper Association recently announced a new 55 percent paper recovery goal. In 2002, Americans set aside 47.6 million tons of paper to be recycled. This represents the recovery of enough paper to fill 220 football stadiums stacked to a height of 100 feet, plus the amount of paper that was collected for recycling in 1990.

*According to experts at the Committee for a Constructive Tomorrow, a nonpartisan, Washington, D.C. think-tank, hydrocarbon producer British Petroleum, (BP) which for two years said it had gone "beyond petroleum" to explore alternative energy technology, was going Back to Petroleum and hopefully Bigger Profits. After it was forced to lower its oil and gas production estimates three times in 2002, the company's return on capital sank below that of archrivals ExxonMobil and Royal Dutch/ Shell and investors expressed their displeasure by dumping BP stock.

*As part of its 50th anniversary, America's leading sports weekly is hitting the road to celebrate the best of sports. America's Sports Illustrated: 50 Years, 50 States, 50 Sports is a year-long celebration that will touch people of all ages, in every state through July 2004. For 50 consecutive weeks, fans can follow the program through the vast editorial coverage in the magazine, extended coverage on SI.com, by visiting the interactive mobile tour stopping at sporting events across the country, and a community sports outreach program. For more information about America's Sports Illustrated: 50 Years, 50 States, 50 Sports, visit SI.com/50.

*According to experts at the Syngenta Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture, industry has succeeded in meeting the demands of growing populations for food and agricultural commodities through combinations of changes in agricultural practices, new technologies, greater use of water and increasing the area of land under cultivation. Farming has made greater use of fertilizers and crop protection chemicals, enhanced the biological potential of crops and livestock to provide the products society wants. The success of these actions is that commodity prices are at an all-time low. However, more than 800 million people around the world are still hungry and malnourished, while one in five lives on less than a dollar a day and very large numbers of people rely on food aid for their survival. For more information, visit www.syngentafoundation.org.

As a Matter of Fact

*For moist air to be classified as fog, visibility has to be reduced to less than 1,000 yards - 1,091.2 to be exact, according to the international definition of fog.

*The Roman Emperor Domitian, it is said, was such a good shot, he could put four arrows between the spread fingers of a man's hand.

*The Great Pyramids of Egypt are the only surviving Wonders of the Ancient World.

*The busiest international telephone route is between the United States and Canada.

*The first gas pump was made by Sylvanus F. Bowser of Fort Wayne, Indiana and delivered to local storekeeper Jake Gumper on Sept. 5, 1885.

*The first, and so far, the only president to be married in the White house was Grover Cleveland. During his second year in office, he married Frances Folsom, who was 27 years his junior.

*The earliest recorded international cross-country automobile race was a match between England and France that took place outside Paris on Mar. 28, 1898. England won.

*It has been estimated that the eye muscles move more than 100,000 times a day. Many of these eye movements take place during the dreaming phase of sleep.

*The pig is the best problem solver among the hoofed animals.

*Gold can be hammered into foil ten times as thin as a sheet of paper.

*The most celebrated diamond is the Koh-i-noor, which was presented to Queen Victoria in 1850 by the East India Company.

*In the 19th Century, students at the Cambridge University, England were not permitted to keep a dog in their rooms. Lord Byron, the famed poet, complied with the rule by keeping a bear instead.

*The first presidential mansion was at No. 1 Cherry Street in New York City, the first U.S. capital (1789-90).

*The tallest species of dog is the Irish wolfhound, which grows to be about 32 inches high at the shoulders.

*There are approximately 2.5 times as many cattle in Argentina as there are people.

*Beards were once placed under government control in Rumania. Whiskers could be worn only if the owner secured an official permit, and paid the appropriate fee.

*The cyclotron, a machine that accelerates electronically charged atomic particles to high energies, was invented in 1930 by Ernest O. Lawrence. He won a Nobel Prize for this achievement.

*The world's highest motor-traffic tunnel is the Eisenhower Memorial Tunnel in Colorado with an altitude of about 11,000 feet.

*The first mechanical pencil was patented in 1879.

Crossword Puzzle

Solution on Page 4

ACROSS

1. Bath floor
2. Explode
3. Of the kind of
4. She (7)
5. Food sprout
6. Sea
7. Arabian
8. Greek letter
9. Tree
10. Ashes
11. Burmese
12. Incessantly
13. Marble
14. Lined
15. Common man
16. Soda
17. Adjective
18. forming out
19. Agave fiber
20. Java
21. Salt mineral
22. South American
23. Hawaiian
24. Farming
25. Yarn
26. Hawaiian
27. House
28. Fish
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DOWN

1. Venerable
2. Sailed
3. Arabian
4. Greek letter
5. Tree
6. Ashes
7. Burmese
8. Incessantly
9. Marble
10. Lined
11. Common man
12. Soda
13. Adjective
14. forming out
15. Agave fiber
16. Java
17. Salt mineral
18. South American
19. Hawaiian
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Answers: 1-C, 2-C, 3-B, 4-A, 5-E, 6-H, 7-A, 8-D, 9-F, 10-B, 11-N, 12-L, 13-K, 14-J, 15-I, 16-M, 17-A, 18-P, 19-Q, 20-G, 21-O, 22-F, 23-J, 24-L, 25-S, 26-T, 27-U, 28-V, 29-W, 30-X, 31-Y, 32-Z, 33-AA, 34-AB, 35-AC, 36-AD, 37-AE, 38-AF, 39-AG, 40-AH, 41-AI, 42-AJ, 43-AK, 44-AL, 45-AM, 46-AN, 47-AO, 48-AP, 49-AQ, 50-AR, 51-AS, 52-AT, 53-AU, 54-AV, 55-AW, 56-AX, 57-AY, 58-AZ, 59-BA, 60-BB, 61-BC, 62-BD, 63-BE, 64-BF, 65-BG, 66-BH, 67-BI, 68-BJ, 69-BK, 70-BL, 71-BM, 72-BN, 73-BO, 74-BP, 75-BQ, 76-BR, 77-BS, 78-BT, 79-BU, 80-BV, 81-BW, 82-BX, 83-BY, 84-BZ, 85-CA, 86-CB, 87-CC, 88-CD, 89-CE, 90-CF, 91-CG, 92-CH, 93-CI, 94-CJ, 95-CK, 96-CL, 97-CM, 98-CN, 99-CO, 100-CP.

How You Can Paint Practically Anything

A fresh coat of paint can quickly change the look of any room in your home. While painting some surfaces can be fairly easy, there are challenges when painting many others. But don't worry-any project can be easy if you have the right tools.

Take the advice of the primer experts at Zinsser when painting the following hard-to-paint surfaces:

**Painting a light color over dark colored surfaces:* Apply a coat of a high quality primer-sealer before you paint to hide previous colors and prevent them from showing through your new paint job. Quality primer-sealers, like Bulls Eye 1-2-3(r), are formulated to completely block even the darkest colors, including deep reds and dark browns, so they won't bleed through, or change, the color of your new paint job.

**Painting over glossy surfaces:* Don't expect a paint to do a primer's job. Ordinary paint won't stick to slick surfaces, like glossy paint, clear finishes, metal, Formica(r), cabinets, paneling or tile.

By applying a quality primer to the surface first, your paint will not only stick to the surface, but your paint job will last longer and won't crack, peel or blister over time. Tip from the Pros: Want to eliminate

sanding from surface prep? Use a primer like Zinsser's B-I-N(r) or Bulls Eye 1-2-3. They're formulated to stick to all surfaces without sanding.

**Painting porous surfaces like builder's flat paint and new drywall:* Porous surfaces absorb paint unevenly and often result in an inconsistent color and sheen that requires multiple coats of paint. A good primer will seal the surface so paint spreads more evenly and easily for a better-looking finish with less paint.

Tips from the Pros: For best results, tint your primer toward the color of your paint. Research shows that one coat of tinted primer and one coat of paint will give you a better paint job than two coats of paint.

**Covering crayon, marker or water stains:* Everyday life is bound to produce a variety of stains on your walls including crayon, lipstick, water stains or grease. With a Zinsser primer in your toolbox you can block and seal stains permanently and prevent them from bleeding through your new paint job.

For more information on painting projects-and, for more home improvement "tips" visit www.zinsser.com, or call Zinsser at 732-469-8100.

NAPS

Recipe Corner

Spring Pea and Roast Chicken Risotto

6 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened; 1/4 cup minced shallots; 2 teaspoons minced garlic; 2 cups Arborio rice; 1/2 cup dry white wine; 6 to 7 cups simmering chicken stock, homemade or low sodium canned; 2 cups roast chicken, cut into chunks; 2/3 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese; 1 1/2 cups shelled fresh peas, briefly cooked; 2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh parsley; 2 tablespoons thinly sliced chives; 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh dill; Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper.

Melt 3 tablespoons of the butter over medium-high heat in a large skillet. Add the shallots and garlic and saut a few minutes. Add the rice and stir until the grains of rice are coated with butter. Add the wine and simmer, stirring, until most of the wine is absorbed. Start adding the simmering chicken stock, about one cup at a time, only adding more chicken stock when the rice has absorbed most of the stock already in the pan. Continue stirring and adding stock until the rice is cooked "al dente," about 25 minutes. Stir in the chicken, then remove the risotto from the heat and stir in the remaining 3 tablespoons of butter and the Parmesan. Add a little more of the simmering stock, about 1/4 to 1/2 cup, to loosen the risotto and make it a bit soupy. Add the peas and herbs, and season to taste with salt and pepper and serve. Serves 4 to 6.

NAPS

Saturdays are Special At Randall Museum

The Randall Museum offers drop-in, hands-on art and science workshops every Saturday from 1 to 4 p.m. at 199 Museum Way (off Roosevelt, above the Castro). All ages are welcome; under 8 must be accompanied by an adult. Museum admission is free with \$3 per person workshop fee. Call 554-9600 for further information.

**Mar. 6: Botanical Sketchbooks:* Get ready to welcome spring by making a botanical sketchbook and drawing the early spring bloomers in the Randall garden.

**Mar. 13 Model Trains* Construct your own model train out of wood scraps.

**Mar. 20 Modern Art Animal Sculptures* Learn about sculpture and modern art as you make your favorite animal out of clay in the style of great San Francisco sculptor Beniamino Bufano.

**Mar. 27: Colorful Kites:* Celebrate the March winds by creating a colorful flying kite.

Other regular Saturday activities include:

**Morning Family Ceramics* from 10 to 11.30 a.m. (\$5 per person workshop fee)

**Meet the Animals* from 11.15 a.m. to 12 noon.

**Animal Feeding* at 12 noon.

**Golden Gate Model Railroad Club Exhibit* from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Top Consumer Fraud Categories of 2003

The Federal Trade Commission has released its annual report detailing consumer complaints about identity theft and listing the top 10 fraud complaint categories reported by consumers in 2003. For the fourth year in a row, identity theft topped the list, accounting for 42 percent of the complaints lodged in the FTC's Consumer Sentinel database. The FTC received more than half a million complaints in 2003, up from 404,000 in 2002, and Internet-related complaints accounted for 55 percent of all fraud reports, up from 45 percent in 2002.

Howard Beales, Director of the FTC's Bureau of Consumer Protection noted that in addition to the complaints consumers register directly with the FTC, other organizations, including the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, The National Consumers League's National Fraud Information Center, Canada's Phonebusters, and Better Business Bureaus contribute complaint data to the FTC's Consumer Sentinel database.

"More than 900 law enforcement agencies in the U.S., Canada, and Australia are using Consumer Sentinel, accessing one-and-a-half million consumer complaints through the Sentinel network," Beales said. "They can coordinate actions, track down leads, and research other law enforcement tools. This model - one central source of consumer fraud data available to law enforcement, reflecting overall trends in fraud, ID theft, and emerging scams - is making our work more efficient for law enforcement and more effective for consumers."

The top 10 categories of consumer fraud complaints in 2003 include:

**Internet Auctions* - 15 percent
**Shop-at-Home/Catalog Sales* - 9 percent

**Internet Services and Computer Complaints* - 6 percent

**Prizes, Sweepstakes and Lotteries* - 5 percent

**Foreign Money Offers* - 4 percent

**Advance Fee Loans and Credit Protection* - 4 percent

**Telephone Services* - 3 percent

**Business Opportunities and Work-at-Home Plans* - 2 percent

**Magazine Buyers Clubs* - 1 percent

**Office Supplies and Services* - 1 percent

Other findings from the report include the following:

**Of the 516,740 complaints received in 2003, 301,835 were complaints about fraud and 214,905 were identity theft reports.*

**Identity theft reports represented 42 percent of all complaints, up from 40 percent in 2002*

**The median loss for victims of fraud was \$228.*

**The median loss for victims of Internet-related fraud was \$195.*

**The major metropolitan areas with the highest per capita rates of consumer fraud reported were Washington, DC; Seattle/Bellevue/Everett, WA; and San*

Diego, CA. Higher reporting of fraud does not necessarily indicate a higher overall incidence.

**The major metropolitan areas with the highest per capita rates of ID theft reported were Phoenix/Mesa, AZ; Los Angeles/Long Beach, CA; and Riverside/San Bernardino, CA.*

Composting and Organic Gardening Classes in March

**Worm Composting:* Saturday, Mar. 6, 10 a.m.-12 noon. Turn your kitchen scraps into rich fertilizer for your plants. Come join a certified Community Composting Educator to learn the basics of composting with a worm bin. Garden For the Environment, 7th Ave. at Lawton St. Free!

**Integrated Pest Management:* Saturday, Mar. 20, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. The basics of IPM will be covered in this workshop, focusing on least toxic ways to deal with landscape pests and diseases. Learn to create an ecosystem in your garden by planting to attract wildlife and a diversity of beneficial insects, which will help prevent pest problems. Garden for the Environment, 7th Ave. at Lawton St. Free! Pre-registration required. This workshop is part of our Resource Efficient Gardening and Landscaping Program, call 731-5627 for a class listing or to pre-register.

**Landscape & Garden Design:* Saturday, Mar. 27, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Learn the basics of sustainable, resource efficient garden design from coordinating plant colors and layout to creating theme gardens, we will explore ways you can enhance an existing landscape or plan for a new one. Garden for the Environment, 7th Ave. at Lawton St. Free! Pre-registration required. This workshop is part of our Resource Efficient Gardening and Landscaping Program, call 731-5627 for a class listing or to pre-register.

Grapevine Want Ads

VOLUNTEERS WANTED for WVCC After School Program to tutor children ages 5-14 at one of our 11 sites in the Visitation Valley area. Interested persons contact Dee Smith, WVCC After School coordinator. (415) 585-2059. **A LITTLE GOES A LONG WAY.** The John McLaren Child Development Center seeks in-kind donations for our newly-created lending library children's books and magazines; small children's furniture; writing and/or art supplies, educational/cultural games or posters. Thank you in advance for your kindness and generosity! Please send all donations to: John McLaren Child Development Center, 2055 Sunnydale Ave., San Francisco, CA 94134. Call 469-4519 if you would like for us to pick-up materials. **GRAPEVINE DISPLAY ADVERTISING** now half off regular rates for a limited time. Full Page: \$75; 1/2 Page \$40; 1/4 Page \$22.50; 1/8 Page \$12.50, 1/12 Page \$7.50. Discount for three or more insertions. Call (415) 467-9300 for more details. **Want Ads;** 20 words for \$1. Extra line 50 cents. Ad and payment should be received by 15th of prior month at Visitation Valley Grapevine, 50 Raymond Ave., San Francisco, CA 94134.

San Francisco City Services

- Abandoned Cars 553-9817
- Bus Shelter Damage 882-4949
- Curb Painting 554-2336
- DPW/Illegal Dumping 28-CLEAN
- Graffiti Hotline 241-9274
- Muni Information 673-6864
- Parking and Traffic Problems (DPT) 553-1200
- Pothole Repair 695-2100
- S.F. Police Inglewood Station 404-4000
- S.F. Police (non-emergency) 553-0123
- Street Lighting 554-0730
- Sunnydale Resource Center 586-7572
- WVMS Anonymous Hotline 281-8406
- Tree Problems 695-2162

Visitation Valley Community Center

Mondays: Senior Shopping 11:30 a.m., Tuesdays: Senior Ceramics 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m., Senior Bingo 12:30 p.m., **Thursdays:** Sewing Class 9 a.m.-3 p.m. **VVCC Regular Board Meeting** is held on the 4th Thursday of each month at 5 p.m.

AUTOMOTIVE

- BAYSHORE AUTO, 2260 Bayshore Blvd., 467-6130
- BAYSHORE SERVICE, 2596 Bayshore Blvd., 239-5239
- CHARLIE'S GARAGE, 2550 Bayshore Blvd., 239-7450
- TW AUTOMOTIVE (mechanic), 2500 Bayshore Blvd., 585-8281
- VALLEY AUTO & TRUCK SUPPLY (Bill Conte), 2520 Bayshore Blvd., 239-5880
- BANK
- BANK OF AMERICA, 6 Leland Ave., 622-4501
- BAKERS
- CUNEO BAKERY, 96 Leland Ave., 239-6090
- LITTLE QUIAPO BAKE SHOP, 169 Leland Ave., 239-2253
- BARBERS
- DeMASI'S BARBER SHOP, 35 Leland Ave.
- THE SHOP (JG), 178 Leland Ave., 239-6709
- BEAUTICIANS
- BODY, SOUL & SPIRIT, 222 Leland Ave., 333-7261
- MAY MAY BEAUTY SALON, 60 Leland Ave., 337-9381
- MIZ RENA'S SALON, 19 Blanken Ave., 467-3399
- NAILS BY JENNY, 50 Leland Ave., 333-6800 WHO'S BADD, 224 Leland Ave., 657-3156
- BLIND CLEANING
- SPEEDY ULTRASONIC BLIND CLEANING (commercial and residential), 1116 Grand St., 467-7505
- BOARDING HOUSE
- ABLE'S CASA, 850 Rutland St., 333-4664, fax 333-4693
- BOOKKEEPERS
- AMY ARAGON PROFESSIONAL BOOKKEEPER, 467-8927
- VERNA WALLACE EA, 2320 Bayshore Blvd., 239-5333
- CARPETS
- HANSAN INTERIORS, 41 Leland Ave., 333-6382
- CASKETS
- CASKETORIUM INC, 93 Leland Ave., 585-3451
- CHURCHES
- CHURCH OF THE VISITACION, 655 Sunnydale Ave., 239-5950
- IGLESIA EL ESPIRITU SANTO, 38 Leland Ave.

- KOREAN FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, 333 Tunnel Ave., 468-1213
- RIDGE VIEW UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, 590 Leland Ave., 239-5457
- ST. JAMES PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, 240 Leland Ave., 585-6381
- VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH, 305 Raymond Ave., 467-6055
- VISITACION CHINESE BAPTIST CHURCH, 8 Desmond St., 333-4503
- COFFEE
- HAPPY DONUT, 2600 Bayshore Blvd., 469-5309
- PICCOLO PETE'S EUROPEAN COFFEE, 2155 Bayshore Blvd., 467-2442
- OAY CARE
- CAROUSEL OAY CARE, 261 Hahn St., 469-5353
- DENTIST
- VISITACION VALLEY DENTAL OFFICE (Albert Kuan, DDS), 37 Leland Ave., 239-5500
- DEVELOPERS
- VISITACION VALLEY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, 333 Schwenn St., 587-7895
- ELECTRICAL
- TATE ELECTRIC (Joel Tate), 467-4657
- FLORISTS
- IL FIORE FLOWERS, 2466 San Bruno Ave., 468-0145
- GARDEN ORNAMENTS
- SILVESTRI GAROEN ORNAMENTS, 2635 Bayshore Blvd., 239-5990
- GROCERS
- E-Z STOP MARKET, 2203 Geneva Ave., 585-9240
- FIVE MILE MARKET, 3574 San Bruno Ave., 467-7300
- KC MARKET, 400 Wide St., 467-3024
- LITTLE VILLAGE MARKET, 1450 Sunnydale Ave., 586-1815
- M & M SHORTS TOP, 2145 Geneva Ave., 585-0878
- PICCOLO PETE, 2155 Bayshore Blvd., 468-6800
- SARI-SARI FOOD STORE, 58 Leland Ave., 239-0580

- 7-11, 2200 Bayshore Blvd., 468-8646
- SHUN LEE MARKET, 2400 Bayshore Blvd., 585-4851
- SMITTY'S MARKET, 2610 Bayshore Blvd., 239-5506
- SUPER FAIR MARKET, 2011 Leland Ave., 239-6856
- TEDDY'S MARKET, 298 Teddy Ave.
- VALLEY SUPER MARKET, 65 Leland Ave., 239-7520
- HERBS
- SAN ON HERBS, 33-A Leland Ave., 333-7469
- HYPNOTHERAPY
- VALERIE HABEGGER-HYPNOTHERAPY, 371 Teddy Ave., 468-5631
- INSURANCE
- EDIE FEPPS (AHE INSURANCE), 467-0236, fax 467-0276
- ROBERT LEHMAN, CLTC, CMFC, 333-0850
- ALICE L. WONG, 160A Leland Ave., 337-8811
- KITCHEN CABINETS
- LEE CHANG INTERNATIONAL, INC., 25 Leland Ave., 333-2730, fax 333-1706
- LAUNDRY CLEANERS
- BAY WASH, 44 Leland Ave.
- CITY WASH INTERNATIONAL, 83 Leland Ave., 333-9467
- COIN WASH & DRY LAUNDRY, 186 Leland Ave.
- FORTY-NINER CLEANERS, 511 Leland Ave., 239-6418
- LELAND AVENUE CLEANERS, 151 Leland Ave., 586-1412
- VALLEY LAUNDRY, 90 Leland Ave.
- VISITACION VALLEY LAUNDRY, 108 Leland Ave., 239-9030
- LEARNING
- 3-N-1 LEARNING ACADEMY, 240 Leland Ave., 584-8555
- VISITACION VALLEY COMMUNITY BEACON CENTER, 450 Raymond Ave., 452-4907
- VISITACION VALLEY FAMILY SCHOOL, 325 Leland Ave., 585-9320
- LIBRARY
- VISITACION VALLEY BRANCH, 45 Leland Ave., 239-5270
- LODGING
- THRIFT LODGE, 2011 Bayshore Blvd., 467-8811

MANUFACTURER

- NATIONWIDE PAPER, 345 Schwenn St., 586-9160
- MEDICAL
- AMERICAN REO CROSS, BAY AREA CHAPTER, 1704 Sunnydale Ave., 584-3620
- HAWKINS VILLAGE MEDICAL CLINIC (Dept. of Public Health), 333 Schwenn St., Appointments 715-0310
- OR SAN HO, MO, 9 Silman St., No. 4, 337-6135
- NORTH EAST MEDICAL SERVICES, LELAND AVENUE, 82 Leland Ave., 391-9686 (ask for Leland Avenue clinic)
- PORTOLA FOOT & ANKLE CLINIC (Dr. Dwyang Patel), 2858 San Bruno Ave., 467-7500
- NOTARY
- ROYAL PACIFIC MORTGAGE & REALTY, 46 Leland Ave., 333-4300
- ORGANIZATIONS
- ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN COMMUNITY CENTER, 2442 Bayshore Blvd., 587-2689
- GENEVA TERRACE PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION, 60 Burn Ave., 584-2700
- GIRLS AFTER SCHOOL ACADEMY, 2050 Sunnydale Ave., 333 Schwenn St., 584-4044
- JOHN KING SENIOR COMMUNITY, 500 Raymond Ave., 239-6233
- LELAND HOUSE, 1411 Leland Ave., 405-2000
- ROCK (Real Options for City Kids), 590 Leland Ave., 333-4001
- VISITACION VALLEY SENIOR CENTER, 66 Raymond Ave., 467-4499
- PHARMACY
- VISITACION VALLEY PHARMACY, 100 Leland Ave., 239-5811
- PHOTOGRAPHER
- WALTER CORBIN PHOTOGRAPHY (freelance), 435 Sawyer St., 587-9471 fax 337-8620
- PLUMBING
- MARK VOELKER PLUMBING, 99 Arleta Ave., 467-7401
- POST OFFICE
- VISITACION USPO, 68 Leland Ave., (800) 275-8777

Visitation Valley Business Directory

Valley business and organization free listings in the 415 area code. Call the Grapevine at (415) 467-9300

REAL ESTATE

- Cathy Kline Saunders, (Zephyr Real Estate), 215 West Portal Ave., 731-5011 ext. 163
- RESTAURANTS
- CLIFF'S BAR-B-Q & SEAFOOD, 2177 Bayshore Blvd., 330-0736, fax 330-9813
- 4 EVERYDAY PEOPLE, 107 Leland Ave., 308-5673
- G & L BAKERY & RESTAURANT, 198 Leland Ave., 239-6283
- SUN FAI RESTAURANT, 30 Leland Ave., 587-2763
- LUANFAI BAKERY, 110 Leland Ave., 585-1167
- RUSSIA HOUSE, 2011 Bayshore Blvd., 467-0252
- SHIRELS SOUL FOOD, 107 Leland Ave., 239-5141
- TWO JACKS RESTAURANT, 167 Leland Ave., 337-0433
- Y & G RESTAURANT, 73 Leland Ave., 469-5686
- SCULPTOR
- CARTORIGIALS (Mikid Cartor), 2 Hahn St., 239-4138
- SELF-DEVELOPMENT
- OYNAMIC DEVELOPMENTS (Marjorie Ann Williams, CEO, Career and Self-Enhancements Specialist), 467-7608
- SERVICE PROVIDERS
- THE VILLAGE, 333 Schwenn St., 239-5045
- VISITACION VALLEY BILINGUAL EDUCATION SUPPORTIVE SERVICES & TRAINING (WEEEST), 120 Leland Ave., 586-7347
- VISITACION VALLEY COMMUNITY CENTER (VVCC), 50 Raymond Ave., 467-6400
- VVCC FAMILY & COMMUNITY SERVICES CENTER, 161 Leland Ave., 586-6998, fax 586-8027
- VISITACION VALLEY JOBS, EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VVJET), 333 Schwenn St., 239-2866
- SIGNS
- SMITH'S SIGNS, 153 Leland Ave., 333-2700
- TAVERN
- THE CLUB HOUSE, 25 Blanken Ave.
- TELEPHONE
- O & A WIRELESS, 78 Leland Ave., 452-4139
- VARIETY
- GOLDEN 99 CENTS ZONE, 5-7 Leland Ave., 33-3923
- VIDEO
- No. 1 VIDEO RENTAL, 144 Leland Ave., 586-1038

IRS Urges Taxpayers to Review EITC Eligibility

WASHINGTON - The Internal Revenue Service recently urged working taxpayers with low incomes to review their eligibility for the Earned Income Tax Credit to see if they qualify for tax relief. This year, the IRS and 14,000 volunteer sites are available to help taxpayers figure out their eligibility.

The IRS receives the majority of EITC claims in February, usually after workers receive their Forms W-2. EITC recipients may also qualify for free tax preparation and e-filing through Free File, which is located on IRS.gov.

"This is an important program, and you should check to see if you qualify," said IRS Commissioner Mark W. Everson. "EITC rules can be complicated so you should carefully review the qualifications. Know, don't guess, if you are qualified. If in doubt, contact the IRS or its volunteer partners for help. If someone prepares your taxes, seek out a reputable professional who understands EITC rules and who will avoid common mistakes."

EITC eligibility rules can be found in Fact Sheet 2004-8, in Publication 596 and through links at 1040 Central on IRS.gov. For tax preparers, there is a new EITC information kit at <http://www.irs-eitc.info/preparer/> and a new EITC tool kit in Publication 3107E.

For the 2003 tax year, income limits have increased. Taxpayers must earn less than \$33,692 if they have two or more qualifying children, \$29,666 with one qualifying child or \$11,230 if there are no children. Income limits are \$1,000 higher if a couple's filing status is married filing jointly.

The maximum refundable credit for the 2003 tax year is \$4,204 for a family with two or more qualifying children, \$2,547 for a family with one qualifying child and \$382 if there are no qualifying children. Many taxpayers qualify for less than the maximum, depending on their income.

The IRS also reminded military families that many of them may also qualify for EITC because supplemental payments and combat pay are

exempt from the income calculations.

The EITC was enacted in 1975 to offset federal taxes paid by low-income wage earners and to serve as a work incentive. Last year, more than 20 million taxpayers collected more than \$36 billion in EITC payments.

The IRS is broadening its outreach to EITC claimants in an effort to maximize participation and minimize errors on tax returns. The IRS is taking several steps, including:

- *Working with more than 180 community-based organizations nationwide to reach low-income workers who may be unaware of the EITC availability;

- *Helping set up 14,000 volunteer centers that offer free tax preparation for low-income and elderly individuals. Times and locations of these volunteer centers are publicized locally;

- *Coordinating with mayors' offices nationwide to help identify low-wage earners who may qualify for EITC;

- *Teaming with a special grassroots cadre in two target cities — Los Angeles and Miami — to reach out to taxpayers who have limited proficiency in English but who may qualify for EITC; and

- *Providing additional EITC tools to tax practitioners who must perform due diligence when preparing tax returns.

The IRS also has consolidated all EITC management activities within a single EITC office. The office will coordinate EITC program administration in an effort to improve the accuracy of tax returns and to improve the agency's internal processing procedures.

EITC claimants also are urged to consider electronic filing, especially through Free File which will offer free tax preparation and e-filing to millions of taxpayers. Free File will be operational in mid-January. E-filing, either through Free File or through a tax professional, will help reduce math errors that can delay a refund. Taxpayers who e-file and use direct deposit will receive their refund in two weeks or less.

Getting Mighty Crowded on Bayshore Boulevard



Vehicular traffic competed with construction crews on Bayshore Boulevard near Arleta and San Bruno avenues after trackage was constructed for the Third Street Light Rail, scheduled for completion late next year.

Taxpayers Should Check Before Applying for Offers in Compromise

WASHINGTON - The Internal Revenue Service in February issued a consumer alert advising taxpayers to beware of promoters' claims that tax debts can be settled for "pennies on the dollar" through the Offer in Compromise Program.

Some promoters are inappropriately advising indebted taxpayers to file an Offer in Compromise (OIC) application with the IRS. This bad advice costs taxpayers money and time. An Offer in Compromise is an agreement between a taxpayer and the IRS that resolves the taxpayer's tax debt. The IRS has the authority to settle, or "compromise," federal tax liabilities by accepting less than full payment under certain circumstances.

"This program serves an important purpose for a select group of taxpayers. But we are increasingly concerned

about unscrupulous promoters charging excessive fees to taxpayers who have no chance of meeting the program's requirements," said IRS Commissioner Mark W. Everson.

The OIC may be considered only after other payment options have been exhausted. If taxpayers are unable to pay their taxes in full, there are other payment options, such as monthly installment agreements, that must be explored before an OIC can be submitted.

The IRS.gov Web site contains complete information on the collection process and payment options. Publication 594, The IRS Collection Process, also provides helpful information on the options available to taxpayers. Taxpayers also should review Form 656, Offer in Compromise, or Form 9465, Installment Agreement Request, to determine if they qualify for either

payment program. Form 656 provides detailed instructions for submitting an offer and includes all of the necessary financial forms.

Some taxpayers may be exempt from the \$150 OIC fee depending on income or whether the OIC is based solely on doubt as to tax liability. Taxpayers who claim the poverty guideline exception must certify their eligibility using Form 656-A, Income Certification for Offer in Compromise Application Fee. The poverty guideline exception applies only to individuals.

Man Dies in Shooting

A 31-year-old man was shot and killed around 7 p.m. in a courtyard of the Sunnydale housing complex on Saturday, Jan. 24. Vernon Green died after being struck by a bullet on the 1500 block of Sunnydale Avenue.

Family/Community Services Center

Visitacion Valley Community Center, Inc.



**Classes at
Visitacion Valley Community Center,
50 Raymond (Ceramic Room)**

**Parenting Education Class
Every Monday, 5:30-7 p.m.
Intake at 5 p.m., Counseling Room**

**Men's Support Group: (52 Weeks)
Every Tuesday & Thursday, 6-8 p.m.**

**Women's Support Group: (52 Weeks)
Every Wednesday, 6-8 p.m.**

For more information on workshops and activities, please contact the following staff members at (415) 586-6998:
Meriam T. Abalos, FCSC Coordinator
Marianna Y. Chan
Stan Zuni

Open:
Monday and Friday: 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday: 8:30 a.m. - 7 p.m.
Saturday: 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

**Literacy Workshop by Jumpstart
Friday, March 5: 5:30-7 p.m. at 325 Leland Ave**

**Parent's Advisory Council Meeting
Friday, March 12, 5:30-7 p.m. at 325 Leland Ave.**

**Father's Support Group/Snow Family Field Trip
Saturday, March 20 from 6:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.
For more information, please call FCSC Staff**

**Parent's Support Group, Saturday, March 27
10:30-11:30 a.m. at 161 Leland Ave.**

**Meet and Eat: Family Fun Nights: Sing-Along Contest
(Adults and Children), Friday March 26,
5:30-7 p.m. at 50 Raymond Ave.**

**Free Grocery Pantry Distribution from 12:30 to 2:15 p.m.,
Saturdays, March 6, 13 and 27 at 161 Leland Ave.**

161 Leland Avenue

(415) 586-6998 Fax 586-8027